

The Michigan Legislature

Lansing, Michigan



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Lawmakers Speak Out Against Privatization

DEMOCRATS SAY: HANDS OFF SOCIAL SECURITY

LANSING – State Senator Deborah Cherry (D-Burton) and Representatives Paula Zelenko (D-Burton) and John Gleason (D-Flushing) joined together today to urge the U.S. Congress to reject the Bush Administration's "risky plan to privatize Social Security."

At a press conference held at the Burton Senior Center, Democratic legislators called on Congress to stand up for Michigan families and protect Social Security by supporting resolutions to end the attack against the nation's social insurance program.

"Two-thirds of older Americans depend on Social Security as their principal source of income, and for another one-third it is virtually the only source," said Sen. Cherry. "Bush's plan removes their safety net and replaces it with a risky scheme."

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office reports that the system is fully funded until 2052. After that, it will continue to payout 80 percent of benefits.

Federal authorities must develop alternative funding that will make up the shortfall while not placing an undue burden on those who have already paid into the retirement system or obliterating younger generations' chance to collect benefits, legislators concur.

Under the President's proposed plan, an estimated 1.7 million Michigan retirees will begin to see drastic cuts in their payments in the next 15 years. Ultimately, if President Bush's plan is adopted, retirees will see benefits slashed in half. For the average Michigander, that means a loss of more than \$400 each month.

"The federal government should not play Russian roulette with our senior citizens' lifeline to financial security," said State Rep. John J. Gleason (D-Flushing).

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